

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service



# *The* International Services Fellowship Program

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Miscellaneous  
Publication No. 1561

# ***What Is International Services?***

International Services is the program area within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) that stations employees worldwide to help keep foreign pests and diseases out of the United States. More than 300 Americans and host-country nationals work in 27 foreign countries on 6 continents to safeguard U.S. plant and animal resources from foreign threats to agricultural health.

To keep unwanted invasive species and diseases from crossing U.S. borders, IS cooperates in major surveillance and control programs in foreign countries. APHIS does this work abroad because it is usually more costly to live with a pest or disease than to eradicate it before it becomes established here. Screwworm, a foreign pest that attacks open wounds in warmblooded animals (including people), is a good example. By spending \$30 million of taxpayer money annually to establish a stable screwworm barrier at the Isthmus of Darien in Panama, U.S. livestock producers save more than \$400 million a year in control costs here at home and lost product value. Working with Mexico and Guatemala to control and eradicate their Mediterranean fruit-fly populations, IS has kept that exotic pest, which lays eggs in ripening fruit, from establishing itself in the United States. An established "Medfly" presence here could cost our country more than \$1.5 billion annually.

By sharing U.S. expertise, IS strengthens the animal and plant health programs and infrastructures of foreign countries. As those countries gain control over their pests and diseases, the risk to U.S. agriculture decreases.



In addition, IS plays a major role in ensuring that U.S. agricultural exports are accessible to foreign countries. IS employees discuss trade requirements with agriculture officials in other countries and explain U.S. agricultural health policies to them. Through these exchanges, IS reduces or eliminates quarantine barriers for U.S. agricultural products and explains the technical basis for APHIS' own import requirements. IS employees stationed abroad have been instrumental in helping to expand export opportunities for the United States, opening up new markets for everything from asparagus to tomatoes.

While making it their goal to expand trade opportunities for the United States, IS employees also work to ensure that agricultural products coming into the United States are safe. Foreign Service Officers manage permanent preclearance programs in a number of countries, including Mexico, Chile, and the Netherlands, to check fruits, vegetables, and flower bulbs headed for the United States. IS also cooperates with the U.S. Department of Defense in preclearing military personnel, baggage, and equipment used overseas before they return to the United States. A great advantage of both military and civilian preclearance programs is that harmful pests and diseases do not reach our ports of entry: they remain in their country of origin.



Protecting agriculture today is a challenge that reaches beyond political and geophysical boundaries around the globe. IS staffers are a small but highly respected group. In their cooperation with foreign agricultural counterparts, IS employees are forging science-based plant and animal health relationships. In the future, these will become the basis for safe international agricultural trade for the benefit of the world community.

## ***The IS Fellowship***

IS is offering fellowships and career exploration opportunities to academically qualified students who are enrolled in postbaccalaureate programs related to agriculture or the biological sciences. First-year graduate students attending an accredited university, or graduating seniors who have been accepted into a postgraduate program, are eligible to apply. Fellowship recipients can receive up to \$20,000 in financial assistance each year they are enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program. Students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade-point average during their fellowship enrollment.



# ***What Does the IS Fellowship Offer You?***

Up to \$20,000 per year for tuition for graduate studies, books, tutors, laboratory and other related fees, a computer, and accessories.

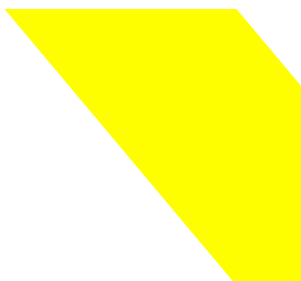
Paid employment during summers and other school breaks. Compensation during work periods is related to academic background and experience and the student's qualifications. Partial coverage in the Federal employees' retirement system, participation in the Thrift Savings Plan (401K), and accrual of paid vacation and sick leave are features of the fellowship. Based on the length of work periods, compensation may include life and health insurance benefits. For each year of fellowship aid, the Career Experience Program agreement requires 640 hours of study-related work with IS. This work, successfully completed, allows APHIS the option to offer students noncompetitive conversion to a full-time, career-conditional appointment with IS. The new employee's duty station may be domestic or in a foreign country.



During the fellowship period, recipients' IS work experience may include plant and animal health work or international agricultural trade activities. Animal health work could entail controlling livestock and/or poultry diseases by observing or performing routine medical procedures, testing, routine laboratory tests, tracking test results, and preparing specimens. Or the work could center on animal disease program management. Duties may include information gathering and data collection, technical computer assistance, and computer, statistical, or quantitative analysis. Plant health work may include test diagnostic work; biological assessment of exotic pest potential; maritime, air, or rail plant quarantine work and preclearance activities; and biological control activities.

Tutoring and mentoring. Academic assistance is available as needed to aid fellowship recipients in achieving mutual academic goals. Mentoring during their academic career and through the early years of their employment with IS is also part of this program.

A possible career appointment with IS after successful completion of the Career Experience Program and graduation with an appropriate degree. If appointed, upon graduation, fellowship recipients are required to work full-time for at least 1 calendar year (12 months) for each school year (2 semesters, 3 quarters, or the equivalent) that they participated in the International Services Fellowship Program. If the recipients fail to serve the entire length of the mandatory IS employment, they may be required to reimburse the agency a prorated share of scholarship funds used.



# How To Apply

## Qualifications

Students interested in the International Services Fellowship Program should apply directly to USDA-APHIS (check the back of this leaflet for our address).

*To apply, candidates must*

- Be a U.S. citizen.
- Be accepted for admission to graduate school, or be enrolled as a full-time, first-year graduate student in good academic standing, at an accredited university within the United States.
- Be willing to work for the agency during school breaks.
- Sign a statement committing themselves to be available for permanent work assignment worldwide.

*Your application must contain the following items:*

- Résumé, including current and summer addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail address.
- Transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate courses completed to date.
- Three letters of recommendation.
- A personal essay by you about your intent and potential contribution to IS.
- Documentation of service in the U.S. Armed Forces or Peace Corps, if applicable.

Qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status, or any other nonmerit factor. Veterans' preference will be applied.

## **Deadline for Application Is March 1**

Completed applications must be postmarked no later than March 1.

### **Nominations should be addressed to:**

USDA, APHIS, Human Resources  
4700 River Road, Unit 21  
Riverdale, MD 20737-1230

You may obtain further information by calling (301) 734-5239 (a local call in the greater Washington, DC, area) or (800) 762-2738 (toll-free nationwide).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, print, audio tape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

*Photo credits:* The airplane and cattle images were taken by APHIS photographer Laurie Smith. All the remaining photos were shot by APHIS photographer Ann Czapiewski.

Issued January 2000